

action, in order to establish initial eligibility for immediate retirement under 5 U.S.C. 8336, 8412, or 8414, and/or to establish initial eligibility under 5 U.S.C. 8905 to continue health benefits coverage into retirement.

(3) An employee retained under paragraph (b) by this section must be covered by chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code.

(4) An agency may not retain an employee under paragraph (b) of this section past the date that the employee first becomes eligible for immediate retirement, or for continuation of health benefits into retirement, except that an employee may be retained long enough to satisfy both retirement and health benefits requirements.

(5) Except as permitted by 5 CFR 351.608(d), an agency may not approve an employee's use of any other type of leave after the employee has been retained under a temporary exception authorized by paragraph (b) of this section.

(6) Annual leave for purposes of paragraph (b) of this section is described in § 630.212 of this chapter.

(c) *Documentation.* Each agency shall record on the retention register, for inspection by each employee, the reasons for any deviation from the order of release required by § 351.601 or § 351.605.

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**§ 351.607 Permissive continuing exceptions.**

An agency may make exception to the order of release in § 351.601 and to the action provisions of § 351.603 when needed to retain an employee on duties that cannot be taken over within 90 days and without undue interruption to the activity by an employee with higher retention standing. The agency shall notify in writing each higher-standing employee reached for release from the same competitive level of the reasons for the exception.

**§ 351.608 Permissive temporary exceptions.**

(a) *General.* (1) In accordance with this section, an agency may make a temporary exception to the order of release in § 351.601, and to the action provisions of § 351.603, when needed to retain an employee after the effective

date of a reduction in force. Except as otherwise provided in paragraphs (c) and (e) of this section, an agency may not make a temporary exception for more than 90 days.

(2) After the effective date of a reduction in force action, an agency may not amend or cancel the reduction in force notice of an employee retained under a temporary exception so as to avoid completion of the reduction in force action. This does not preclude the employee from receiving or accepting a job offer in the same competitive area in accordance with a Reemployment Priority List established under part 330, subpart B, of this chapter, or under a Career Transition Assistance Plan established under part 330, subpart E, of this chapter, or equivalent programs.

(b) *Undue interruption.* An agency may make a temporary exception for not more than 90 days when needed to continue an activity without undue interruption.

(c) *Government obligation.* An agency may make a temporary exception to satisfy a Government obligation to the retained employee without regard to the 90-day limit set forth under paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(d) *Sick leave.* An agency may make a temporary exception to retain on sick leave a lower standing employee covered by chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code (or other applicable leave system for Federal employees), who is on approved sick leave on the effective date of the reduction in force, for a period not to exceed the date the employee's sick leave is exhausted. Use of sick leave for this purpose must be in accordance with the requirements in part 630, subpart D, of this chapter (or other applicable leave system for Federal employees). Except as authorized by § 351.606(b), an agency may not approve an employee's use of any other type of leave after the employee has been retained under this paragraph (d).

(e)(1) An agency may make a temporary exception to retain on accrued annual leave a lower standing employee who:

(i) Is being involuntarily separated under this part;